

*Chapman*

April 1953

# CHILD WELFARE

JOURNAL OF

THE CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

VOLUME XXXII • NUMBER 4

price 35 cents

at Work  
Library

HV

741

A24

C.18

V.32

10.4

C.2

l of  
the  
by  
y of  
or

\$7.50

ath of

h the  
e job

enings  
kers in  
ogram  
Excel-  
tation,  
good  
salary  
Zane,  
ices of  
artford

nt de-  
r. Psy-  
e and  
Serv-  
onn.

dren's  
insti-  
ed and  
ust be  
work  
elfare.  
dren's  
Wis.

[ 18 ]

# CHILD WELFARE

JOURNAL OF THE CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, Inc.

Published Monthly except August and September, by the Child Welfare League of America

• HENRIETTA L. GORDON, Editor

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION \$3.00

SINGLE COPIES 35 CENTS

Child Welfare is a Forum for discussion in print of child welfare problems and the programs and skills needed to solve them. Endorsement does not necessarily go with the printing of opinions expressed over a signature.

CHECKS PAYABLE TO Child Welfare League of America, Inc.

24 West 40th Street, New York 18, N.Y.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Extending Adoption Opportunities for Negro Children . . . . .	3
The Role of Staff in Children's Institutions . . . . .	7
Editorial Comments	
The Child Welfare League and Community Services for Children . . . . .	10
Protective Service—Whose Responsibility . . . . .	13
Book Note . . . . .	17
Classified Ad Service . . . . .	18

## COMMITTEES ON PUBLICATIONS

MRS. RICHARD L. BOWDITCH, Board Member, Children's Aid Association, Boston, Mass.

### Policy Committee

MRS. GEORGE P. EDMONDS

MRS. JOE HUME GARDNER

GRACE A. REEDER

E. MARGUERITE GANE

SOPHIE VAN S. THEIS

### Advisory Committee

SALLIE E. BRIGHT. . . . . Executive Director, National Publicity Council for Health and Welfare, New York, N. Y.  
MRS. CLEVELAND B. CHASE. . . . . Board Member, St. Christopher's School, Dobbs Ferry, N. Y.  
HYMAN GROSSBARD. . . . . Clinical Director, Hawthorne Cedar Knolls School, Hawthorne, N. Y.  
DR. ROMAN L. HAREMSKI. Supt., Child Welfare Division, State Department of Public Welfare, Springfield, Ill.  
DOROTHY HUTCHINSON. . . . . Professor of Social Work, New York School of Social Work, New York, N. Y.  
ADELAIDE KAISER. . . . . Director, Hillside Children's Center, Rochester, N. Y.  
FRIEDA M. KUHLMANN. . . . . Case Consultant, Spence-Chapin Adoption Service, New York, N. Y.  
MARY LOIS PYLES. . . . . Consultant, U.S. Children's Bureau, Washington, D. C.  
VERNE WEED. . . . . Assistant Executive Director, Children's Services of Conn., Hartford, Conn.  
RUTH WEISENBARGER. . . . . Assistant Director, Sheltering Arms Children's Service, New York, N. Y.  
HELEN M. WHEELER. . . . . Director, South End Day Nursery, Boston, Mass.

# EXTENDING ADOPTION OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEGRO CHILDREN

Lois Raynor\*

Executive Director  
Friendship House  
Scranton, Pennsylvania

*This article is welcome for it suggests ways in which community groups can aid in finding adoptive homes for Negro children.*

EVERYWHERE there is a superabundance of couples from every walk of life clamoring to adopt blue-eyed babies and golden-haired little girls and boys to grace their homes. What of the numerous homeless children who do not fit this description, yet are desperately in need of parental love and a home to call their own?

The Child Placing and Adoption Committee of the State Charities Aid Association has become increasingly aware of the need for long-range planning and active efforts on the part of adoption agencies in order to serve more adequately the needs of children for whom adoption has been hard to achieve. Included are Negro children and those of Oriental and mixed racial, or national backgrounds, as well as white children who have lost their own families after reaching school age. We have witnessed these children, whose own parents have died or have abandoned or relinquished all interest in them, living indefinitely in temporary shelters, institutions and boarding homes, their opportunity for a permanent home growing more remote with every passing year.

Few families apply to adopt these children, but we have some conviction that there are homes that would be happier for the addition of one or more of these hapless children growing up without family ties or a sense of belonging that is so tremendously important to the growing child.

The problem is not new but rather intensified by the increasing number of such children available for adoption. Since its inception in 1898, the Child Placing and Adoption Committee of the State Charities Aid Association has placed children of all ages and races. In fact a Negro child was placed even that first year, when adoption was quite new to social agencies, and others were placed in the years that followed. However, by 1939 it was felt that some special effort would be required to meet the need for homes for these children. Accordingly, in that year the agency organized in New York City, an interracial Committee on Adoptive Homefinding that has been active in sponsoring newspaper publicity and occasional radio talks.

\* Formerly with State Charities Aid Association, New York City.

By 1948 the agency's experience covered half a century of child placing, with some 7000 children placed in permanent homes, a very substantial number of these being older children and those of non-Caucasian racial and national strains. Yet there were many others awaiting homes and it was decided to make a more intensive effort by taking the problem to communities in the State outside the metropolitan area. The Committee on Adoptive Homefinding in cooperation with Miss Sophie van S. Theis, now retired Executive Secretary of the Child Placing and Adoption Committee at S.C.A.A., conceived the idea of informal community or neighborhood committees, to interpret this need and to interest more families in applying for such children.

## Steps in Organization

They began in a moderate-sized town on Long Island. The minister of one of the local churches who knew the agency and was active in interracial activities, was instrumental in interesting a number of local people in serving on the committee. The agency representative asked the help of some of these people individually, because of their knowledge of this community and their interest in the welfare of children. Included were a second minister, a local physician, a housewife and a merchant (all Negroes), and three white townspeople—a one-time social worker, a gynecologist, and an enterprising young mother of two adopted children. All were invited to the home of one of the members, where they organized themselves into a committee with a chairman and secretary.

One of the first activities was a fifteen-minute radio broadcast over a local network. Two committee members were interviewed on a women's program. The agency's part was to provide the script. The committee members did all the planning.

Recognizing the importance of good local photographs in newspaper publicity, the committee sought to obtain newsworthy pictures and at the same time to protect the identity of local children and families. The committee solved this by enlisting the cooperation of the police department and a recently appointed young Negro patrolman. The Committee



chairman and this young man had their pictures taken with a little Negro girl from another part of the state who had been waiting many months for an adoption home. The editor of a local paper recognized the newsworthiness of this picture, and its publication resulted in applications from Negro couples.

At another time when this committee had become discouraged at what seemed to be a lack of response to their efforts, the agency provided a "success story" of a little boy happily placed elsewhere in this same county through the efforts of a committee some distance away. The results of committee activity cannot always show up in the home community, but may appear anywhere.

This Long Island committee made a suggestion which resulted in an effective picture leaflet, later distributed in all parts of the state, announcing that "Children like these need homes. For information apply to. . . ."

Soon committees were formed throughout the state. Each group was highly individual, reflecting its particular town, city or county. In most cases one key person suggested others who might be interested in adoptive homefinding. In one town it was a Negro lawyer, in another the director of a community center, in still another it was a Negro boarding mother suggested by the Supervisor of Child Welfare in that county.

This boarding mother invited the Negro women in her small community, as well as several from neighboring areas to attend a tea at her home. She included the ministers of two Negro churches, as well as the county child welfare supervisor and two or three other white people who she knew were interested in opportunities for children, and in the work of our agency. Twenty-seven attended this first meeting. Four of the fifteen Negro families who live in this small community applied to adopt children.

When this group organized itself into a committee, it was somewhat smaller than the twenty-seven who attended the first meeting, but it had become very active and spread out into the whole county. Much of this committee's most effective work of education and interpretation has been achieved by word of mouth. It is a real "grass roots" committee that comes into close personal contact with the people who may wish to adopt children or who have relatives, friends or acquaintances who are glad to know that they may be able to adopt a child without being wealthy or influential, and without complicated or expensive legal procedures or fear of a child's natural parents trying to reclaim him.

Another committee has begun to use television as a method of publicity, with committee members and the representative of the adoption agency appearing

on a local network as a public service feature. Members of this committee say most people now have television sets and many seldom use their radios. This gives us something to think about in terms of keeping up with the new mediums of communication favored by the groups we are trying to reach. We must be sure, too, that our press releases go to the papers read by the groups we want to reach, and that agency brochures and announcements are distributed in doctors' offices, churches, beauty salons, and club-rooms used by those we hope to interest in adoption.

The Councils and Federations of Women's Clubs are a resource we are just beginning to tap. These groups are interested in the welfare of children and family life, and have many excellent contacts. The Women's Auxiliaries of fraternal and veterans organizations can play a similar role.

Last year our "parent" committee in New York City, honored two charter members for twelve continuous years of service to the committee. To this meeting they invited members of newer committees from communities outside the metropolitan area making it possible to get acquainted and to exchange ideas.

### Contest Used to Foster Interest

Soon after the joint meeting the New York City committee decided to sponsor a contest aimed directly at interesting more Negro families in adopting a child. One hundred dollars was offered for the best paper of 1000 words or less, on the subject "How To Interest More Colored Families In The Adoption Of Children." A staff member gave almost full time to directing this contest and to bringing it before the public. Three prominent persons, two Negro and one white, consented to act as judges, and one of the judges, Mrs. Marshall Field, made the awards at a ceremony in the agency office.

In publicizing the contest we directed our energies toward reaching Negro people all over the State of New York. Actually the news traveled much farther. News releases were sent to all the daily and weekly newspapers in the state. Many local radio stations throughout the state agreed to make spot announcements, and an agency representative appeared on a television program in upstate New York to explain the contest and its relation to the local Committee on Homefinding of the State Charities Aid Association. A well-known newspaper columnist mentioned the contest in his syndicated column, so it reached far beyond the Empire State and brought entries from cities as far away as Phoenix, Arizona. The Negro press cooperated, as did the Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of

Colored People. This brought the contest to the attention of their various chapters and subscribers in and near New York State.

The importance of interesting Negro families in offering a homeless child a family by adoption was recognized also by the Department of Health in New York City, and the public health nurses up-state who cooperated by distributing announcements of the contest and leaflets on adoption. The public libraries all over the state did the same—so did community centers and settlement houses, Negro colleges, fraternal and veterans' organizations, neighborhood councils and home bureaus, Civilian Defense offices and child welfare workers in the cities and counties. Literature was sent across the state to churches with Negro or interracial congregations. The interest and cooperation of the clergy proved an excellent means of reaching family groups.

The contest produced 250 entries from 21 states. A student nurse, a native of Washington, D.C., training in New York City won first prize. Second prizes were awarded to a graduate nurse from Philadelphia and to a Westchester County mother of four children. Third prizes were won by people from New York City, Brooklyn and northern New York State. Honorable mention for thoughtful, original papers, was also given.

In promotion work such as this, it is important to take every opportunity to bring the story before the public. Newspaper and other publicity was arranged in the home town of the winners.

The contest ideas included everything from proposals for improving the status of the Negro in order to make adoption possible, to drastic changes in agency adoption procedures. Some thought the State or Federal Government should appropriate funds for adoption work and declare a "Child Adoption Week" or vote a "Young-Age Pension" to foster parents for support of adopted children "since it is just as bad to be too young to work as to be too old to work."

A number of contestants presented ideas for citizens' participation in Negro adoptive homefinding, such as letting people know that it is possible to adopt children from outside their own state, canvassing carefully chosen neighborhoods where one is most likely to find people who will meet an agency's eligibility requirements, citizens committees including specialists in such fields as social work, medicine, sociology and psychology, to answer the community's questions about adoption and to arrange for agency publicity; testimonials by happy adoptive parents; a Speaker's Bureau composed of adoptive mothers and fathers; documentary films. One person offered the idea that magazines with special interests, such

as sports or movies, might feature interviews with adults who were adopted as children. It was interesting to learn how many people still thought of dependent children as orphans living in dark orphanages behind high stone walls.

Sermons and pulpit announcements, notices in church bulletins and denominational publications, local committees of church people to stimulate interest and recruit homes, special meetings of ministers to confer on this subject, speakers at annual meetings and conferences, an adoption play to be given before church groups were recommended.

The use of billboard and bus and subway advertising, posters in shop windows, tape recording featuring a famous Negro making an appeal to Negro families were among the suggestions. Special exhibits of material related to adoption, in libraries was also proposed.

A number of changes in adoption procedures were recommended such as (1) reducing the number of procedures necessary before placement of a child and (2) making agency eligibility requirements more widely known in order "to dispel rumors in regard to the rigid financial, religious, and housing standards set by agencies." Several felt that adoptive families should not be expected to maintain a higher standard of living than other families in similar circumstances provide for their own children. In line with this, there was much feeling that adoptive agencies should not insist upon a separate sleeping room for a child, and that cultural and economic differences should be realistically appraised, for instance the need for adoptive mothers working because of low wages among Negro families.

In her prize-winning essay, Miss Virginia Harris pointed out the importance in homefinding of taking advantage to the fullest extent of each individual contact. She said, "Mr. and Mrs. John Doe may never pause again to listen to this worthwhile story you have to tell."

As with the efforts of committees, results of the contest, in terms of increased homes, were satisfactory rather than spectacular. Results are not always immediate, but experience has shown that when we have active citizen committees we have more applications and the homes offer more choice.

### Effects of Community's Work

When citizen committees are active children are placed quickly whereas applications drop off sharply if our committees become inactive. The first year we worked with committees outside the metropolitan area, the number of Negro children placed in adoptive homes doubled. In succeeding years there has

been a steady though slower increase. County and city child welfare officers and workers have welcomed these efforts of the State Charities Aid Association to promote interest in adoption among Negro people and have cooperated fully. Many have told us they believe, as we do, that what benefits one agency benefits others as well, and that, as the Negro public becomes more interested in adoption, fewer homeless Negro children in our country will be deprived of the love and security that an adopted family can offer.

News travels fast among the mobile population of our country and, in one instance, a Negro family in the Middle West became aware of the availability of children for adoption when a minister, who had been a member of an S.C.A.A. committee in upstate New York was transferred to a church in a midwestern town. We referred these applicants to an agency nearer their home and two children have been successfully placed. As a result of publicity for the contest, a newspaper woman in another midwestern state became interested in the placement of Negro children for adoption and gave the idea further impetus through a Negro newspaper in that state. Several families seeking children wrote to us and were referred to local agencies which needed just such homes.

It is necessary in all our publicity and interpretation, to differentiate between boarding care and adoption, since the public is confused, perhaps because both kinds of homes are commonly referred to by social agencies as "foster homes." In addition it must be clarified again and again that it is not white babies for whom homes are sought; otherwise unrewardable hopes are raised in the hearts of white couples who flood the placement agencies with applications.

The effectiveness of the committees depends upon a variety of factors, but none are more important than the members and the chairman. A satisfactory meeting place is required and constant encouragement from the agency. While some committees meet most happily in the home of a member; others meet in church buildings, a club, or a restaurant. The New York City committee meets at the agency office. Most committees meet at least four or five times a year. Meetings need to be planned in advance to be interesting and at the same time serve to broaden the horizons of members in relation to the needs of children. They like to know of something concrete they have done or can do to help these children, then progress reports are an essential feature.

Good program materials for discussion are such recordings as "Let Me Have Some Of My Own Ways," prepared by Walter Houston and Helen Parkhurst in cooperation with a group of children

and the State Charities Aid Association, and "Wanted: A Baby," which is narrated by a physician who had learned from his own experience the value of the adoption agency. Stories of individual children ready and waiting for adoption or the story of a child happily placed through their efforts or through the work of another committee is stimulating. They should know how the adoption agency works and the precautions against undue risks that are taken. Most important, their own imagination and initiative for letting more people know there are children waiting for homes, should be encouraged.

Members of the Negro and the white communities worked together harmoniously, although many of them had not enjoyed much earlier opportunity of knowing members of the other group on a basis of common interest. It has been gratifying to note, too, the increasing interest on the part of the white as well as the Negro press in pictures and stories of Negro children.

With experience has come an increasing awareness of patterns in Negro culture that cause them to hesitate to take children for adoption through social agencies, such as their apprehension about the legal procedure and their conception of social agencies as white institutions for relief of the destitute. Our committees are working on interpretation in just such areas as this.

### Stimulating Indigenous Participation

In the organization of committees, we have found that a real "grass roots" interest produces the most homes, also that it is personal contact between the agency representative and the committee members, and between committee members and others in the community that creates good will and a favorable response. If the agency representative has real enthusiasm and conviction about the children's need and the ability of citizen groups, these groups can meet the challenge effectively.

All the committees are completely informal groups. They have no official connection with the agency, no financial responsibility and no definite time period for their existence. These citizen groups are engaged in community education and interpretation to promote and stimulate interest in adoption of certain children who are in need of homes. Committee members never interview applicants, study families, determine placements, or in any way take on the functions of social workers. These committees have not limited these activities exclusively for Negro children. The problem of finding enough homes for the Negro children and for older white children has been their con-



cern. The child placing agency must learn new ways of approaching and solving this problem. They must not only bring the needs before the public, but they must keep them there. One good drive, one big spurt of effort is like a flash fire that burns brilliantly for a brief time, then dies as quickly as it starts. This problem calls for a steady, continuous effort by as many means as we can devise.

The work with our citizen groups has shown that there is a vast potential interest in children that can be awakened. People recognize the need when it is presented to them. It is our firm conviction that there is an adoptive home somewhere for every child for whom adoption is a particular need. Child placing agencies have the responsibility and the privilege of bringing the child and the home together.

## THE ROLE OF STAFF IN CHILDREN'S INSTITUTIONS

**Abraham Kostick**

Resident Director

Jewish Child Care Association  
Newark, New Jersey

*The author suggests that the problems of children in institutions require a unified approach on the part of the staff.*

THE child who enters the institution today has had difficulties which leave him unable to establish normal relationships and who therefore needs the kind of environment where he is free from adults who expect a return on their emotional investment in him. We must re-evaluate the objectives of the children's institution in terms of this type of child.

It is axiomatic in the field of child placement that the ultimate objective in child care is the return of the child to the most nearly normal environment into which he can fit. The needs of each child may vary from time to time, and each one may need different types of placements at different times. In view of this objective, we must then infer that the institution can only serve a particular purpose at a particular time for a particular child. The institution cannot duplicate family life, nor can it claim to be a normal living arrangement in the community for the child. The goal of institutional placement should be the return of the child to normal communal living; either living with a family or living on his own in the community.

If the administration of the institution is sensitive to the needs of children, it will consider very seriously the fact that the children who come to the institution have difficulty in relating to people because of personality problems or because a personal social situation precludes their living in a family. If the purpose of the institution is to help the child return to the community, then it must help him in his relationship with people or resolve the social situation which prevents his return to his own family or to the community. The mechanisms which can be used are mainly group living and the individual services made available by the institution through casework and related services. The common basic characteristic of

all institutions, no matter what they see as their purpose, is the fact that children live in groups; that there are staff members who work with these groups and with the individual children in these groups. The relationships between the staff members and the groups of children and between the staff members and the individual children in these groups vary in accordance with the personalities of the staff members. But the relationships in these areas vary even more in accordance with the philosophy and objectives which the institutional administration has set for the staff.

Each staff member must know his own role and understand his function in relation to the child, if the child is to be helped within the institutional setting. In an institution there is a multiplicity of possible relationships. This may give a child the chance to flit from one person to another, diffusing his energy, without actually establishing a meaningful relationship with any one person. This must be taken into account in planning how to help such a child develop the capacity for establishing healthy relationships. It is only through his living and working with various staff members and with his peers that the child will develop new patterns essential if he is to move from the institution to a more normal environment.

### Staff Is Team of Various Disciplines

The institutional staff includes the child-care staff, the casework staff and the medical staff; in many institutions it also includes professional group workers or recreational workers, a consultant or staff psychiatrist; and it may even include a clinical staff for treatment of children under care. It is important that these disciplines operate together as a

team. This implies a common philosophy, a common objective to which all members of the team subscribe. They must operate within the framework of their own functions and the team relationships.

Two of the most important staff units in any institutional program are the casework staff and the child-care staff. The casework staff assumes the responsibility for the individualization of the child and helps him with the social planning for himself and his family. The caseworkers are responsible, first, for the intake process and they must relate to the needs of the child and his family. Then, after the child has been placed, the caseworker attempts to understand the emotional needs of the child. Through this appreciation of the dynamics of the child's behavior, the caseworker is able to help the resident staff gain insight and understanding into the child's adjustment in everyday living at the institution. With this knowledge the caseworker is better able to help the child understand himself as well as to help the child and his family in social planning for themselves.

The final aspect of the caseworker's function in the institution is the discharge of the child from the institution. The caseworker must be geared to the changes which take place in the child and to the child's feelings regarding his placement. He must be close to the child-care staff so that he can be sensitive to changes taking place in the living situation. When the child has reached the maximum of his ability to absorb changes within himself or in his family, he should then be helped to leave the institution, either for a new form of placement or to return to his own family or the community.

The persons most directly responsible for the overall care of the child in the institution are the child-care staff. This staff generally consists of the houseparents or counselors and group workers. This is the part of the staff which must undergo the greatest re-orientation in terms of the change in the type of children who are now being admitted to child-caring institutions. Previously it was the focus of the child-care staff to see themselves as parents or act in lieu of parents. It was this focus that made for the competition between foster home placement and institutional care.

### Parental Relationships Should Not Be Imposed

The child-care staff of an institution must accept the implications of caring for children whose experiences have distorted their way of relating to people. Because of these distortions they are not able to accept parental relationships. The staff should not impose parental images on the children

even though the children need it, unless a child is ready. They must consider that the child may be most comfortable in the group. The child-care staff then must understand the group dynamics and use. They should see themselves not as parents but as group leaders who are responsible for working with the group and with the child within the group. It does not follow from this orientation that the child may not see the members of the child-care staff as parental persons. However, the staff member must become aware of how the child wants to use him. At the same time he should become cognizant of the meaning for the group and for the particular child in his taking such a role.

We cannot ignore the interpersonal relationship between a child and the person who is directly responsible for him. This relationship has some elements of a parent-child relationship, such as concern about his well-being, care of clothing, provision of allowances, etc. The number of such elements and the closeness of the relationship depends upon the child and the staff member. However, a genuine parent-child relationship is precluded by the number and ages of the children for whom the staff member is responsible and the nature of his position as an employee with regular hours and defined responsibilities. The stability which many children seek is often found in the physical structure and the organization of the institution rather than in the staff which represents it. The staff may change but the institution and all it represents remains constant.

Despite the emphasis on group care and the influence of the institutional structure, the staff member has a direct personal relationship with each child outside of his relationship to the group. In living as intimately and closely as the children and the resident staff do, it would be ostrich-like for us to overlook the interpersonal relationships which are developed between a child and a staff member. The degree to which both the group dynamics and the interpersonal relationships are used by a child varies with the needs of that child and the availability and adequacy of the staff. The size of an institution, the ages of the children, the ratio of staff to children, all affect, basically, the degree to which these two forces can effectively be used. In a small institution there would be a tendency to stress the interpersonal relationships because of the smaller number of children involved and the lessened chances of developing homogeneous groups. Children up to the age of 14 tend to form groups, whereas the older adolescent begins to think in terms of disassociating himself from the group and wants more of a personal relationship with adults or another child. This is the "dating age," with all it implies.



The institution should provide opportunities for meeting the group needs and the individual needs of the child. This can be accomplished by a structure which allows the resident staff sufficient opportunity, through small grouping, reasonably assigned responsibilities and adequate staffing, to work through either or both methods to meet the needs of the children under his care. A staff member must see himself as a person who is at all times related to a group of children and to the individual children in that group. He cannot divorce himself from it, and he must therefore, retrain himself to meet these new demands.

### Goal Is Identification With Group

Each child, as he lives with the group of children in the institution, relates to them on the basis of his past experience. The objective should be for him to identify with the group, to be accepted by them, and to be involved in the group process, where he begins to accept group discipline and to attain status and acceptance. The group leader is available to protect the individual interests of each child and to help direct the process into creative and therapeutic channels. Many times a child will develop a sense of security in the group, and from that base develop an ability to relate to adults. Other times he develops this relationship first with the adults, and then is able to make an adjustment into the group. The interplay between the child, his peers, and the group leader may make for the development of the child's awareness of himself, sense of security with people, and new patterns of behavior toward them. These intergroup and interpersonal reactions can be used by the casework staff in working with the child and by the group leaders in everyday living to help the child become more mature, and begin to move into the community.

The group leader represents the institution and is responsible for the child. At the same time he identifies with the child and the group. His particular disciplines should enable him to work with the child on the basis of the child's needs within the limits of a group and institutional structure. This adult works within the framework of an established plan for a child and not on the basis of his own emotional needs or a familial constellation. He makes himself available to the child on the basis of the understanding he has acquired about this child, and relates to him on this basis. At the same time he is acutely aware of the group of children with whom this child reacts, and should understand the dynamics of the group and the group interactions.

### New Skills Required of Personnel

The implications of this are manifold in terms of the training and the type of person one would look for to fill these positions. These changes imply professional training and approach to problems which previously were brought to need "only common sense." This calls for training and supervision in group work, in the dynamics of the individuals and the group, and for the application of these principles to everyday living. It might well mean the development of a new discipline concerned with the application of the dynamics of the individual and the group, and the interaction of these two forces, in everyday living in a controlled environment. Unfortunately, the community has not yet provided the facilities for the training of the resident staff of institutions. These staff members must rely on whatever skills they have developed in related fields and on their own personal maturity, enthusiasm and stability, plus the institutional facilities, for in-service training and supervision.

The supervisor of the house staff should consider that, in general, his staff members have no common base of training. It is his job to work with each staff member on the basis of that person's experience, level of understanding and feelings. Supervision of these untrained people has to be on the basis of their day-to-day functioning. Their reaction and the individual child's, plus the reaction of the group to daily living, should be interpreted in the light of an understanding of individual and group dynamics. The supervisor should be able to interpret to this untrained staff the professional thinking of the casework and psychiatric staff members and help them to accept what are, in many instances, strange concepts and integrate them into their daily functioning on the job. He has to be able to give these staff members a true sense of the importance of their role in the institutional program, as essential as that of the psychiatrist, the physician and other staff members. If he is able to do this, the institutional team will function as colleagues and the resident staff will not be relegated to second-class professional status. As a corollary, the formal in-service training should be developed to provide a common base and frame of reference for service to children.

A well-organized institution, besides its casework and group care staffs, should have a group of specialists including a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a physician, a remedial teacher and others depending on the function of the institution, the type of child accepted, and the budget. The role of this group would

*(Continued on page 12)*

## EDITORIAL COMMENTS

### The Child Welfare League and Community Services for Children

TWO statewide reports concerning the needs of children, recently published, contain many implications for National, as well as state and local, agencies. These are a Michigan report based on six studies of children's needs, published by the Michigan Welfare League, and a report to the Pennsylvania "Governor's Committee on Children and Youth," submitted by its Subcommittee on Social Welfare.\*

Both reports, and the studies and hearings on which they were based, constitute illustrations of state and local interest in reviewing children's needs and children's services, given such great stimulation by the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, and its preparatory and follow-up programs. These programs were widely representative of the interest and participation of a large cross-section of American life, as indicated by the fact that over 100,000 people in every state and territory participated in the preparatory work under the leadership of state and local committees and national voluntary organizations.

The Michigan report places strong emphasis on the responsibility of parents in the service of children, but declares that carrying out such responsibilities increasingly involves help from outside the home. It finds general acceptance, in the six studies on which the report is based, of the need for including in a basic structure for children's services those which could supplement the home and those for the protection of the child away from his own home. It specifies the services which all children need to further normal growth and development, the services which children and youth need because of special handicaps, and the services necessary to effect better coordination among agencies serving children and stimulate more widespread developments. Four tests of the headway made in Michigan in providing these services are posed: Are needed services available, are they obtainable, are they helpful, are they efficient?

Illustrations of what lacks in the picture may mean for particular groups of children are drawn from re-

ports of studies focused on foster care, detention care, and care of children involved in deviate sex offenses. The goals toward which nearly 250 recommendations in the reports of six studies are directed are summarized as including community services more understanding of the needs of children, more helpful to children, and more resourceful for children. Greater emphasis, the report states, should be placed on preventive services, expanding educational, research and treatment services that will strike early at the roots of maladjustment. As to the ways in which more helpful and more resourceful service can be provided, consideration is given on how competent staff can be recruited and trained, and how better use can be made of the services that now exist. Means by which unified child welfare services in counties and in the state programs can be developed are suggested. "Our public agencies," the reports states, "must team up with our voluntary agencies more effectively. The question of public or private agency auspices for children's services is not seen to be an either/or issue." Teamwork between public and private agencies is a keystone for successful operation of any program. Discussion, decision, and action on the part of parents, agencies, and community groups are necessary to make headway in improving services to children.

The Pennsylvania report is based on open hearings, held in different parts of the state, on unmet needs of dependent and neglected children. The Subcommittee believed it had evidence on the need for improvements in legislation on and services for child care and adoption, but held that information was lacking from responsible citizens over the state regarding the specific changes the public feels are necessary and would support. The registration list for the 12 hearings that were held included about 1,800 people, and 375 written statements were recorded at the hearings or mailed to the Committee.

The opinion of many who spoke at the hearings was that a complete child care program in Pennsylvania should provide several services, including foster care, protective services, adoption placement, and services to unmarried mothers on behalf of their children. Services for the mentally or physically handicapped child were also given consideration. Many specific suggestions were made.

In both the Michigan and the Pennsylvania reports, concern was expressed regarding the availability of services, the location of public services within the governmental structure, problems of securing qualified personnel, the need for standards, the relation between official and voluntary agencies, and the need for additional facilities, such as regional detention homes (in Michigan), and additional

\* So That Our Children Can Be Better Served, An overview of recent statewide studies which offer information and suggestions for further developing children's services in Michigan, by Irving Weissman, published by the Michigan Welfare League, 482 Hollister Building, Lansing 8, Mich.; Report to the Governor's Committee on Children and Youth on the Needs of Dependent and Neglected Children Based on Statements at the Open Hearings May 7-June 4, 1952, Submitted by the Subcommittee on Welfare, October 16, 1952 (Mimeographed.).

facilities for mentally retarded children (in Pennsylvania). Both reports were vigorous in stating unmet needs and in stressing the responsibility of citizens for understanding and helping to secure the services from the community that are needed to supplement the home in rearing today's children and tomorrow's citizens.

What do these, and many other reports of statewide and community studies, have to tell us about ways in which a National voluntary organization devoted to advancing standards of child welfare can be of maximum service?

In the first place, they constitute additional evidence of the importance of strong, well-financed services under voluntary auspices, as well as improved and more widely available public services for children. The essence of our American civilization is individual responsibility, stemming from the individual conscience. One must go beyond what one is obliged to do by law, to include what one wills to do as a result of his own compassion and his own understanding of others' needs. We can never be content to do only that which a majority of voters and legislators agree should be done at public expense and under public auspices.

The Child Welfare League is a National agency particularly dedicated to the improvement and enlargement of voluntary services. At the same time it has a clear conviction that voluntary agencies must encourage and support services that for various reasons are required as a part of the functions of state and local government. Particularly it sees the importance of furthering the incorporation in the programs of both public and private agencies of the best that we know concerning what children need and how services may be geared most fully to meeting those needs. In this endeavor the Child Welfare League must, of necessity, work closely with other National voluntary organizations and with the United States Children's Bureau and other Federal agencies.

Enough money is being spent in this country for far less vital purposes to assure for every child access to what may be needed for his physical, mental, emotional and spiritual growth. The problem is not, as in many other parts of the world, how to afford service but how to foster understanding that will lead to re-direction of money and effort so that each child may have his fair chance in life. The Child Welfare League has an important mission in this field.

At the root of many problems of child care is the lack of systematic and informed appraisal of community needs, such as that represented by these two reports, and inter-meshing of resources and personnel

to meet these needs. Community planning and the modification, readaptation, and coordination of community programs have always been a major concern of the Child Welfare League, which of course brings it into association with many other organizations interested in this subject. Here, as in all other aspects of service to children, freedom from a stereotyped approach, imagination, and alertness to natural resources within families, neighborhoods, and normal groupings in the social structure, are essential.

The question of recruiting, training, and keeping up-to-date the professional staffs required for the many different types of community services studied in Michigan and Pennsylvania is one of the most critical questions in the whole child welfare field. The training in understanding of children and ways of helping them afforded to non-professional personnel in institutions and other settings, is also a critical one. Joint explorations of the United States Children's Bureau and the Child Welfare League, and services rendered by each to states and local communities, afford one of the most fruitful avenues for helping to strengthen child welfare work.

Yardsticks for measuring service and evaluating results represent a kind of help in which the Child Welfare League has been engaged for many years, through its work on standards. This work needs constantly to be checked and supplemented by research that will clarify judgments as to the impact of different types of programs on the growth and development of children and the conservation and strengthening of their roots in family and community life.

The National agency needs to have its vision and its program kept close to the realities of the conditions affecting children where they live, for its value lies solely in its ability to bring information, a basis for comparison, encouragement and support to local effort. Studies of the kind reported here are a contribution to this nationwide service as well as to the particular children on whose behalf they are made.

KATHARINE F. LENROOT

### New League Reprint

"Community Planning for Human Services: A Review" by Harry L. Lurie of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds which appeared in *CHILD WELFARE*, February, 1953, has been reprinted. Copies may be obtained from the League office at 10 cents each.



## NEWS FROM THE FIELD

### 24-Hour Emergency Service Reported\*

**Editor's Note:** *The Protective Service Division of the Children's Aid and Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Buffalo, New York, has recently reported on its plan for emergency service. This is a summary of its report, prepared by Miss Olive L. Brumbaugh, the supervisor.*

THE Children's Aid and Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children has long been concerned with finding a satisfactory way of handling after-hour emergencies. The agency once maintained a shelter where police or others might bring children at any hour, day or night. When, in 1926, the shelter was replaced by temporary foster homes, the problem of emergencies occurring after hours remained. For a while police took children directly to foster homes at night, but this presented many difficulties. Various other plans were tried, until the present method was developed about three years ago.

The plan involves rotation of six of the casework staff for emergency calls, each one being "on call" for a week at a time. Calls coming after hours go directly to a telephone answering service. If the calls do not seem urgent, the operator suggests that the caller "leave word" for the office in the morning. She then takes messages for the staff. However, if an emergency service is requested, she calls the caseworker on duty who takes over at that point, determining whether sufficient help can be given over the phone to carry the situation until the following day, or whether emergency action is indicated.

Workers are reimbursed by the agency on an hourly basis for time spent in the field on Emergency Service, in recognition of the personal inconvenience this entails.

The understanding and use of this service by clients and the community have steadily increased. In 1952, workers received 478 requests for service, involving 1,040 children. Many of the troubled individuals who called were relieved just by telephone consultation, while many other situations, such as when children were lost and no relatives could be located, required immediate service. Emergencies requiring action were speedily answered. The average length of time between receipt of a call and the worker's arrival at the home or police station was only forty minutes.

Although the workers doing this field service find

\* The full report (seven pages) giving an account of the distribution of calls by months of the year, the sources of referral, the nature of the problems and the dispositions, is available for circulation to League members upon request.

that it entails inconveniences, they believe the service is essential. In this plan the agency has found a satisfactory method of handling after-hour emergencies in a way that is both practical and effective.

## ROLE OF STAFF IN CHILDREN'S INSTITUTIONS

(Continued from page 9)

vary in accordance with the philosophy and function of the agency.

One would not expect the physician in an institution to function as if he were serving a private family, but rather that he be an integral member of the staff, working with them toward the resolution of the children's problems and offering his particular skills to help resolve them.

The maintenance staff should also be helped to understand the institution's general policies so that they might sustain an accepting and positive attitude toward the children.

The key person in the institution is the administrator. He determines the quality of service, through administrative processes and through the supervision of the staff. He sets the tone and the philosophy and clarifies the function of the agency for the staff. He provides the framework within which each staff member can function. He has to be able to understand the limitations as well as the particular skills of each staff member and know how these skills can be used to the advantage of a particular child. He must be able to pull together the various disciplines and integrate the work of staff members to form a unified approach to a particular problem.

If the entire staff accepts the concept that their task is to help children and that their treatment of the children is dependent upon their understanding of the dynamics of each child's behavior, an institutional atmosphere conducive to the best development of each child's personality will evolve.

An institution's program is as good as its staff and cannot therefore be evaluated in terms of the adequacy of its physical facilities or its organized program alone. The institution should be seen as a team of staff members who are able to work together in the interest of each child appreciating each other's contribution and understanding each other's responsibilities and limitations.

The Louisiana State Department of Public Welfare now has available for distribution to interested persons the informative pamphlet, "Services to Unmarried Mothers in Louisiana." For copies write: Edward P. Dameron, Commissioner of Public Welfare, P. O. Box 4065, Baton Rouge 4, Louisiana.

## PROTECTIVE SERVICES—WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY\*

AS we look back, we are aware that concern for the welfare of children, because of their helplessness, is not new. Parents are responsible for the care of their children but where parents are unable or unwilling to meet the needs of their children the community must step in. This was done in a rather unorganized fashion until about eighty years ago when the first Humane Societies and Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children were organized and given certain powers and responsibilities through state legislation. Not every community has such an organization and in some states, legislation gave public welfare agencies the responsibility to care for all children, whatever that care entailed. This situation exists today. In some communities S.P.C.C.'s or Humane Societies carry this responsibility; in others, public agencies have the authority to protect children. In others, protective services to children seems to be no agency's responsibility—none having seriously accepted this service as theirs to give. There can be only one conclusion. Every community needs to face the fact that some children need protection, that they and their parents need the help of the protective agency. Who gives it seems to me to be a matter for each community to decide. Once that is decided, it is important that there be no indecision on the part of the designated agency in giving this help.

### Using the Casework Method

My impression is that part of the problem for many agencies is how can protective services be given through the casework method. During approximately the first fifty years that communities tried to help children who were neglected, workers, or agents as they were called in many places, made an investigation of reported neglect, taking the case to court if there was provable neglect, and closing the case if court could not be used. As we have learned to use the casework method in offering help to people reported as neglecting their children, procedures have changed.

As an illustration, I would like to tell you about the Brown family.

A report was received that Betty, aged three, was left alone, sometimes for several hours. Mrs. Brown was said to be working while Mr. Brown, unemployed, had the responsibility for caring for Betty. The agency worker wrote to the Browns saying that a report had been received that Betty was not receiving proper care. The letter continued that the worker needed to see the parents to discuss this matter. An appointment was offered at the agency office.

\*This is an introduction to a discussion held at Eastern Regional Conference of the Child Welfare League, Asbury Park, New Jersey, February 1953.

This agency believes in seeing people in their home and few cases are closed without at least one home call. On the other hand, there is the belief in giving the parents an opportunity to put something into this new and many times unwanted relationship. Being able to come to the office this first time may be a big step toward their using the service. Mr. and Mrs. Brown kept the appointment and readily talked about having left Betty alone, although they said the length of time she had been left alone was shorter than was reported.

They told the caseworker that their whole situation had been all mixed up. Although only a few days had passed, they had started to do something about it. Mr. Brown had gotten a job and Mrs. Brown planned to quit working. They professed loving Betty and wanted to do whatever was needed so they would not lose her. As they had looked at their problems, after they received the letter, they began to see that their way of living was not what they themselves wanted.

It was recognized with Mr. and Mrs. Brown that they had started some very large changes; changes which they might find hard to carry out and maintain. The offer of the agency worker to continue seeing them for several weeks was accepted. What went into these interviews would require considerable time to report. In a general way, the concern was with the problems they felt and most of them related to one big problem, namely their lack of togetherness. They had not discussed things in the past year or so and had gradually but surely grown farther and farther apart. At the last interview which took place in the home the parents took great pride in what they had been able to do. They pointed to Betty, a happy, healthy child, and said that her appearance could tell the worker how thrilled and happy they all were.

The Browns might well have been taken to court and perhaps Betty might have been removed from them under the investigatory procedure described previously. It was recognized, as it should be in every situation reported as neglect, that parents do not begin suddenly to neglect their children. They are found to be troubled people whose values are distorted. They need help in looking at what is involved. If the caseworker is able to help them evaluate their situation, she has done her part. This may sound oversimplified but it is far from a simple process.

Not in every instance do the parents come together as did Mr. and Mrs. Brown. Some parents are unable to work on their problems and even when the neglect is so serious that there is danger of losing their children, they are unable to use their strengths toward making needed changes so the children may remain with them. This is understandable if we are willing to see some parents as upset, troubled people, with their present difficulties having snowballed.

Some can begin making changes at once and others cannot. If court is used as a resource and not as a last resort, the removal of custody of the children enables some parents to work on their problems so the children may return to them.

### How Parents and Children May be Helped When Court is Used

A report was received that Mrs. Smith drank excessively and besides being abusive to the children she sent them out to the neighbors and others to sell items from the home such as pans and bedding in order to get more money for liquor. Mr. Smith worked but failed to make enough to provide Mrs. Smith with sufficient money for her drinking. He was described as weak and unable to do anything about his situation. He was reported to be disturbed by Mrs. Smith's relationships with other men as well as by her drinking.

In the first interview, the mother denied everything but the father indicated that he was concerned and discouraged. The worker informed Mr. and Mrs. Smith that the reported neglect was extremely serious and unless there was real change very soon, the agency would need to take the matter to court where custody of the children might be removed and the children placed away from the parents. The worker put in a great deal of feeling for the parents in their dilemma and offered help in examining what they had in their situation, some of which they might wish to change. Mrs. Smith who saw no reason for this, finally agreed to appointments but kept none of them. Mr. Smith failed his first appointment but responded to the caseworker's further offer of help by seeing her. In the meantime, the worker kept in touch with several people who knew what was happening to the children. She was carrying responsibility knowing how the children were being cared for. Had the care become worse, she would have needed to act quickly.

Mr. Smith was able to look at his situation to some extent but all he saw was bad. Every attempt by the worker to help him see any good, failed. He felt he could put nothing different into it and that court action with placement of the children, was the best thing. Mrs. Smith when seen again denied any problem. She spoke of not caring if the children were removed. Mr. Smith was able to help the children with this anticipated action by talking with them, going to clinic with them for pre-placement medical examinations and coming to the agency with them on the day of placement. The two older children were interviewed by the caseworker to discuss placement and their feelings about it. Mrs. Smith was unable to take any part in the placement of the children. She appeared at court and after considerable discussion, she admitted neglecting the children.

Whether this family has been re-united or not is unknown since the protective agency withdrew after custody was removed. Casework help was available to the parents at the agency giving the placement service.

### The Court a Resource, Not a Last Resort

Not every parent can take help at first and some never can. Punitive action taken against the parent has to be questioned. It never will be taken if we believe that negligent parents are upset, troubled people who need help with their problems and punishment is not that help. Our concern should be to sharpen our own skills so we may be able to help more and more of the parents who are reported as neglecting their children. Use of court for the removal of children may be necessary for the protection of the children and may be helpful to parents if we can see beyond it to the help that can be given them after court. Some are able to use this help in working out their problems so their families may be re-united.

On the basis of Protective Services being a helping service whose responsibility is it to give?

Perhaps the answer to the question can only be that it is each community's responsibility. Which agency is something which each community needs to decide. One thing is clear that our greatest casework skill is none too good. It requires a specialized skill and unless there is clarity and the organization to concentrate on what is involved in giving this service, there can be serious confusion. There is also a likelihood that it will remain no one's concern. The casework method and its use has changed a great deal over the last twenty-five years. We surely anticipate other changes as we learn more about him to help people.

We need to examine now, whether or not we are using all of our present knowledge and skill in giving protective service, a specialized service to children who are reported to be neglected or abused.

Among the questions about Child Protective work which need discussion, the following are suggested as of immediate concern, and as aids in differentiating Protective Services from other children's casework services:

1. How available is service to children needing protection? Are provisions made for children who need care when offices are closed?
2. How should emergencies—immediate needs of children—be met?
3. What is our right as regards entering the lives of families, unasked and unwanted?
4. What is neglect?
5. What is good practice about collecting and using information? What is involved in investigation?
6. Who decides whether a child is suffering? How long should an agency giving protective services remain in the situation?

OLIVE BRUMBAUGH



## EASTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS 1953

THE Eastern Regional Conference brought 576 people from the Child Welfare field to Asbury Park, N. J. on February 4-5-6. Representatives came from six states and the District of Columbia. The opportunity to take over a resort hotel during an off-season period gave Executives, Board and Staff members an environment conducive to sharing experiences, re-thinking practice, and enjoying three days of new and old acquaintanceship in a friendly atmosphere, so important an aspect of conference attendance.

The atmosphere of the Conference and the successful course of our three-day deliberation, reflected the careful planning of our Chairman, Frieda M. Kuhlmann. As a result of her organization the committee operated with pleasant efficiency.

Well before the opening date the response left no doubt of enthusiasm about the coming Conference. Advance registration for the 15 two and three session Institutes and Group Meetings totaled 448. So heavy was the registration for four Institutes that second sections were arranged. The Institutes especially in demand were, "How Do We Help a Child Use Placement," "How Do We Help Develop a Good Foster Home," "How Do We Help a Foster Child's Own Parents to Accept Placement and the Child to Accept Separation," and "Living with Troubled Children in an Institution."

Later issues will carry papers and discussions from some of the Institutes and Group Meetings. Leaders graciously accepted the additional task of assembling résumés for publication.

When we looked for a principal theme of the Conference, we found an interweaving of subject matter growing from the field of foster care, adoption, day care, residential treatment, and public and private agency cooperative responsibility in the field of child care. The examination revealed concern with new trends in child welfare and prevailing was an increased acceptance of the concept of placement as a method of treatment of disturbed child-parent relationships. We found ourselves giving greater consideration to placement geared to a child's needs, as exemplified by the focus of the Institute programs on varying types of placement, including institutional and day care. Three Institutes and one General Session devoted to the use of group care as a treatment plan evaluated the modified use of the institution in a child care program. The inclusion of day care institutes this year points to the integration of day care within the child welfare field.

Exploration of new concepts suggested the need for continuity in our study and evaluation of practice. The League might help further research by suggesting some continuity in regional conference discussion topics. Many times in those three days at Asbury Park we heard participants regret that time limited

the discussion of unanswered questions. Further pursuit of specific subjects might be encouraged through providing a foundation assembled by research, comprising country-wide problems, practices and experimental projects. Among questions in the forefront of our concern are, what is responsibility of the private agency in considering the transfer of children for foster care to the public agency? What factors are considered? What criteria are used? How valid are these criteria and how can we evaluate them in relation to the needs of children?

In the field of adoption a further exploration of what is meant by early placement, and in the field of foster care a study of varying concepts of short time placement are suggested for discussion with material assembled by the League from country-wide thinking and practice.

The Nominating Committee examined carefully the continuity in Regional Conference over-all planning. They recommended a basic structure for a rotating committee membership which would always include a nucleus of persons from the prior year. This could be done through a system of one, two and three year conference committee membership. The election of new members by the Conference was done on the basis of this plan with the goal of eventually getting to a three year membership. So enthusiastic was the Conference about Asbury Park as a meeting place that it has voted to return there next February. Louis H. Sobel was elected Chairman; Miss Ava F. Collingwood, Vice-Chairman; Miss Alla C. Hood, Secretary; and Jacob Trobe, Treasurer.

(MRS.) ELISABETH HOWE JONES  
*Secretary, Eastern Regional Conference, 1953*

## NEW LEAGUE PUBLICATION

### A Guide to the Development of Group Day Care Programs

THIS revised edition of the Guide was prepared by the League's Day Care Committee and tested by the League's consultant staff in conferences with day care staff and board members. It discusses both principles and the practical details essential to the development of a group day care program, as can be seen from these topics: the meaning of day care; the responsibility of the board, qualifications and responsibilities of the executive, health education and casework program.

A valuable list of the equipment appropriate for both preschool and school-age group programs and a wealth of photographs make the Guide especially useful.

This publication was made possible through the Child Welfare League's participation in the United Community Defense Services and is published jointly by the League and the UCDS.

Price \$1.00

## CONFERENCES—1953-54

### Southern Regional Conference

April 16, 17, 18  
Hermitage Hotel  
Nashville, Tennessee  
*Chairman:* Miss Edna Hughes  
*Mail address:* Division of Child Welfare  
State Department of Public Welfare  
204 State Building  
Nashville 3, Tennessee

### South Pacific Regional Conference

April 26, 27, 28  
Dwinelle Hall, University of California  
Berkeley, California  
*Chairman:* Clayton E. Nordstrom  
*Mail address:* Children's Foster Care Services  
2206 MacArthur Boulevard  
Oakland 2, California

### Northwest Regional Conference

April 30, May 1, 2  
Olympic Hotel  
Seattle, Washington  
*Chairman:* Mrs. John L. Milligan  
*Mail address:* 1535 Summit Avenue  
Seattle 22, Washington

### New England Regional Conference

May 18, 19  
New Ocean House  
Swampscott, Massachusetts  
*Chairman:* Lawrence C. Cole  
*Mail address:* Child Welfare Services  
State Department of Social Welfare  
610 Mt. Pleasant Avenue  
Providence 8, Rhode Island

### Southwest Regional Conference

June 10, 11, 12  
Cosmopolitan Hotel  
Denver, Colorado  
*Chairman:* Rothe Hilger  
*Mail address:* Colorado Children's Aid Society  
314 14th Street  
Denver 2, Colorado

### Midwest Regional Conference

Early in 1954  
Chicago, Illinois  
*Chairman:* Dr. Roman L. Haremski  
*Mail address:* Child Welfare Division  
State Department of Public Welfare  
628 East Adams Street  
Springfield, Illinois

### National Conference of Social Work

May 31-June 5  
Cleveland, Ohio  
*League Headquarters:* Hollenden Hotel  
*League Program Committee Chairman:*  
Miss Katharine J. Dunn  
Children's Division  
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of  
Cincinnati  
Dayton, Ohio

### Subcommittee Chairmen:

West Coast: Mrs. Alice White  
San Diego, California  
Midwest: Leon H. Richman  
Cleveland, Ohio  
East Coast: John E. Dula  
White Plains, New York

## ADOPTION AGENCY FINDS TIMING AFFECTS RELINQUISHMENTS\*

*From a report of a study on relinquishments recently completed at the Children's Home Society of California. The study, based on small but significant numbers, has important implications for all adoption agencies.*

THE Children's Home Society, a voluntary adoption agency, has in the past had a practice of not accepting surrenders from natural parents until the study of the child for adoption was completed. Since work with the parents proceeded along with the child, this was satisfactory in many cases; however, the Society became concerned about some parents who were anxious to relinquish the child and re-establish their own lives before the study was completed.

Because of this concern and because of the broadening concept of adoptability in the community and the recent liberalization of the California law which now permits a child, relinquished and later found to be unadoptable, to be eligible for public support, it seemed timely to the Society to re-study its policies with the view to making them more helpful to parents and children.

The study was based on new children admitted to the agency for possible adoption from January 1 to March 31, 1952. A total of 87 children were included; 80 of which were infants and 7 older children. A schedule including all data on relinquishments was filled out by each caseworker for all of the children and parents in her caseload within the scope of the study. The study was in process from January 1st to August 21st, 1952.

### Findings

Parents of 72 of the 87 children wished to relinquish the children for adoption. Of these, 66 or 92% in all were accepted; 50 or 70% were accepted when the parents were ready to sign; and 16 or 22% at a later time. Of the 21 remaining children, plans were under way at the end of the study to accept relinquishments on 5 more, one had been found to be unadoptable, one had died and 14 had been reclaimed by their parents. Thirteen of the parents who reclaimed their children did so because they wished

\* The complete report written by Clyde Getz, the Executive of the California Home Society is available in mimeographed form for circulation among member agencies.

to keep them so far as could be determined, and one parent decided to arrange an independent placement. The time needed by parents until they were ready to relinquish varied in the case of 67 parents who relinquished during the study as follows:

- 31.3% relinquished in less than one month,
- 44.8% took one to two months,
- 16.4% took two to three months,
- 7.5% took three to four months.

No marked relationship was found between the length of service the parents received and their readiness to relinquish. Of the 22 cases, where relinquishments were not accepted when the parents were ready, 20 involved infants. Nineteen of these infants were later found to be suitable for placement, and the one child who was not placeable because of a heart condition had been diagnosed immediately. In the situations where relinquishment had not been taken when the parents were ready, delays later occurred when the agency was ready to accept surrender because the parents had left the community and for various other reasons.

Among the conclusions were the following:

1. The readiness of parents to relinquish was not necessarily related to the length of service they received; however, early referral of the parent was important in providing skilled and understanding help as needed to meet problems related to the parent of the child and in helping parents to continue with agency services.
2. Many parents were psychologically ready to sign relinquishments before the study of their baby was completed.
3. Failure to accept relinquishments when the parents were ready made difficulties for the parents by keeping them "dangling" and not knowing what to expect and therefore resulted in a less helpful service to them. It had been found that delays in accepting relinquishments sometimes resulted in independent placements, although this happened only once in the period under study.
4. Accepting relinquishment when the parents were psychologically ready made possible the placement of the baby as soon as he was ready. Failure to do this often meant delays for children.
5. A policy of accepting relinquishment when parents are psychologically ready, provided there are no gross physical or mental defects in the child, would not appear to result in accepting responsibility for unadoptable children.

### Resulting Change in Policy

On the basis of the study, the Society changed its policy to provide for accepting relinquishments in the future when parents are psychologically ready to sign, unless there is evidence of gross defects, mental or physical, that would raise question of adoptability of the child. There has been enthusiastic response to this change on the part of referral sources, agency staff, and most important, the parents receiving service from the agency.

## BOOK NOTE

**SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN**, by Marion Palfi, New York, Oceana Publications, 1952, 96 pages \$1.50.

This is a book of photographs which tells about the children in America who are not benefiting by our knowledge and skill and resources; who do not enjoy a happy and healthy childhood which leads to a good life in their adult years.

The photographs have been gathered from various parts of our country—from north, south, east and west. The collection includes scenes from city slums, from migrant camps, from shabby schools, from settlement houses, from courtrooms and jails.

Here is a poignant, pictorial story of abject poverty, malnutrition, neglect, disease, dirt, brutality, and everything evil and awful. Here is a story of discrimination and segregation, of racial hatred and social injustice, portraying vividly blindness, indifference, prejudice, stupidity, and apathy on the part of John Q. Public.

These pictures are wonderful from an artistic standpoint. They fulfill to perfection Aristotle's specifications for tragic drama. They are full of both terror and pathos. In some of them there is bitter irony. The first picture in the book, for example, reveals three Negro children playing in a Washington slum, and the proud dome of our nation's Capitol glistening white nearby.

One would have to be a calloused sort of person, indeed, to be able to look at these pictures without feeling guilt and sympathy, as well as an impulse to "Do something about it." It was undoubtedly Marion Palfi's purpose to arouse just such reactions. And, I would say, he has succeeded.

The reading material in the book is minimal. Two pages at the beginning present some interesting statistics well calculated to take the wind out of any American's sails, who is inclined to boast too loudly of his country's achievements. These pages are based on the Report compiled by the members of the Fact-Finding Committee of the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, and the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey of March 1950.

Passages from the Bible are quoted on almost every page, I suppose to add power to the pictures. For the most part, these Scripture passages are well selected. Some of them are quite strikingly illuminated by the pictures. It is interesting that words spoken so many centuries ago, in such a very different context of time and place, and with an original application so far removed from the content of this book, could, in most instances, fit its purpose so patly.

This tragic quality of this book is mitigated in its last twenty pages which give hope by showing that things are being done in various parts of the country to improve the situation for our neglected children and youth. Jule Bouchard's work with "street clubs" is featured; also the Henry Street Settlement, the Police Athletic League, the Community Education Program of the New York City Board of Education and numerous other efforts by social agencies, cultural agencies, educational groups, churches, etc. There is promise in these pages and inspiration.

REVEREND WILLIAM THOMAS HEATH  
*Trinity Church, Buffalo, N.Y.*



## New League Members

Ridge Farm  
40 East Old Mill Road  
Lake Forest, Illinois  
Samuel P. Berman, Executive Director

Hathaway Home  
840 North Avenue 66  
Los Angeles, 42, California  
Miss Maxine Elliott, Director

The Nursery Foundation of St. Louis  
1916 North Euclid Avenue  
St. Louis 13, Missouri  
Mrs. Clotild Ferguson, Executive Director

Pasadena Day Nursery  
255 South Oak Knoll Avenue  
Pasadena 5, California  
Miss Katharine G. Seager, Superintendent

## National Conference to Feature Job Clearing House

A public employment service office, manned by employment specialists and serving as a nationwide clearing house for jobs in the social work field, will be a feature of the 1953 National Conference of Social Work in Cleveland.

The job clearing house will be installed on an experimental basis by the United States Employment Service in cooperation with affiliated State Employment Services. The specific purpose of the plan is to provide arrangements for bringing job orders and job applicants in the social work field together.

To facilitate the planning and make possible more orderly procedures and more effective service at the Conference, advance filing of job orders and applications may be placed at any of the 1800 State Employment Service local offices located throughout the country. The closing date for advance filing of job orders and applications is May 15, 1953.

## CLASSIFIED AD SERVICE

### New Rates

Classified personnel ads will be inserted at the rate of 10 cents per word; boxed ads at the rate of \$7.50 per inch. The minimum for each insertion is \$2.50. Payment must accompany all orders.

Deadline for acceptance or cancellation of advertising is the eighth of the month prior to the month of publication. Ads will be published in one issue only unless specified otherwise.

Classified ads listing a box number or otherwise not identifying the agency will be accepted, with the stipulation that a statement be enclosed with the ad to the effect that the person presently holding the job is aware of the fact that the ad is being placed.

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**—Opening July 1 for experienced male worker with Master's degree to take charge of county agency. Recently closed children's home and converted to foster home program. Full support of progressive-minded board. City of 45,000—County of 85,000. Salary commensurate with experience and ability. Please send complete outline of background and salary requirements. Write M. H. Pryor, Chairman, 465 Marion Ave., Mansfield, Ohio.

**CASEWORKER** for children's institution; provisional member CWLA, urban setting. Graduate from accredited school preferred. Salary range \$2700-\$4200 depending on qualifications. Write Methodist Children's Home, Selma, Ala.

**CASEWORKER** wanted in small Catholic family and children's agency. Minimum requirements one year of graduate work. Opportunity for further training. Salary from \$3,000. Write Director, Diocesan Bureau of Social Service, 42 Jay Street, New London, Conn.

**CASEWORKERS**, professionally trained—Openings are expected this spring in a state-wide, private, nonsectarian children's agency providing adoption, boarding home, residential treatment services. Excellent supervision, reasonable caseloads, good personnel practices with salary range to \$4560, commensurate with qualifications. Real opportunities for advancement. Student training center. Beautiful city and state with unusual cultural and recreational advantages. For full information regarding agency and community, write Children's Services of Connecticut, 1680 Albany Ave., Hartford 5, Conn.

**CASEWORKERS**—Immediate openings for two professionally trained workers in developing residential treatment program for emotionally disturbed children. Excellent supervision, psychiatric consultation, carefully controlled caseloads and good personnel practices with current salary range to \$4560. Write C. Rollin Zane, Executive Director, Children's Services of Connecticut, 1680 Albany Ave., Hartford 5, Conn.

**BRANCH SUPERVISOR**, man or woman, private agency undergoing reorganization. Offers foster family care, adoption and protective services. Graduate accredited school of social work. At least one year supervisory experience. Some experience in child placement preferred. Unusual opportunity for person interested in developing supervisory and administrative skills. \$4000-\$4500 according to experience. Elizabeth Glover, Executive Secretary, Maryland Children's Aid Society, Baltimore 18, Md.